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MILITARY

Negative

Action Assigned to: Gilbert
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INTERNAL

1. Leadership: All but O.V. Kuusinen and N.M. Shvernik of the 14 Moscow-resident members and candidate members of the Central Committee Presidium were on hand to greet N.S. Khrushchev on his return to Moscow from the provinces March 24, and all of these same individuals were identified at activities in the capital subsequently during the week. Most of them took turns in attending the arrivals and departures of the bloc delegations to the Warsaw Pact political consultation committee meeting. Presidium Member and Soviet Ambassador to Warsaw A.B. Aristov was among the Soviet ambassadors present for the Warsaw Pact session, but Candidate Presidium Member and Soviet Ambassador to the GDR M.G. Pervukhin was not identified. (His attendance at the Heinrich Rau funeral in Berlin March 25 was reported in the Soviet press.) The prolonged absence from public view of elderly Presidium Members O.V. Kuusinen and N.M. Shvernik may be a measure of poor physical health rather than of their political standing which, however, seems bound to suffer if they are no longer able to take a sufficiently active part in Party or protocol affairs. Kuusinen in particular seems to have faded this year. He has been present with other Presidium figures only once (February 9) out of 12 group appearances since the New Year's Eve party in the Kremlin.

Khrushchev's March 21 speech in Alma-Ata was published in the central press March 26. Like his March 14 speech in Akmolinsk which also was broadcast "live," his Alma-Ata speech thus far has only been summarized briefly by the Soviet translating service which normally provides full texts in English and other languages. A typical Khrushchev off-hand suggestion, made in the March 21 speech, that the use of light and durable plastic materials for Central Asian herdsmen's tents (yurta - normally of heavy felt or skins) might be worth considering has evoked the usual prompt and positive response. According to press reports, plastic yurts are already on the drawing board if not in actual production.

2. Additional Republic Party Congresses Scheduled: In the past two weeks, four additional Republic Party Congresses have been scheduled as the result of actions by Republic Central Committee Plenums. The Latvian CP Congress will start September 26, and the Georgian, Estonian and Lithuanian Congresses are all scheduled for September 27.

3. More Republic Ministers of Agriculture Relieved: The release of Latvian Minister of Agriculture A.A. Nikonov March 22, Tadzhik Minister of Agriculture A.A. Abdullayev March 23, and Uzbek Minister of Agriculture D. Khanazarov March 27 brings the total of republic agricultural ministers replaced this year to nine. This leaves untouched only two ministers in the Ukraine, Belorussia, Estonia, Kirgizia, Lithuania and Moldavia. Some of these, like the Ukraine's M.S. Spivak (severly criticized earlier along with former Ukrainian premier N.T. Kal'chenko, since demoted to deputy premier), have not been noticed in public activity for some time. The Kirgiz ministry and its Minister M. Umuraliyev also have been subjected to considerable criticism. A new first deputy minister of agriculture has been named in Belorussia (S.G. Skoropanov).

EXTERNAL - POLITICAL

4. Laos: The first public Soviet response to the latest Western proposals on Laos was a Pravda "Observer" article on March 27, which took a generally favorable view of the British move and the President's March 23 press conference statement on Laos, but avoided endorsing all the British proposals, especially that of a cease-fire, and threatened retaliation should direct SEATO military intervention take place in Laos. There seemed to be great sensitivity over the US military build-up in Southeast Asia. The position was taken that the Soviet Government would not give in to this but naturally would choose negotiations over armed action as a means to settle the Laos problem because this would conform with the USSR's consistent "peace" policy.

The meeting of the SEATO Council was depicted as a gathering where there were deep divisions and disillusionment. The press took the line that although SEATO was ineffectual, it was capable of plunging militarily into Laos and thus increasing the danger of wider hostilities over Laos.

5. Soviet-US Relations. The President's recommendation to Congress for an increased military budget was briefly reported without comment in the Soviet press which specified the increase will provide more money for submarines, rockets, and an increase of 13,000 men.

The decision by the Department of Justice to drop the charges against Soviet UN employee Melekh was praised in the Soviet press as "liquidating the provocative affair begun by the Eisenhower Administration." The action, the press claimed, proved that the US has recognized that the absurd charges were false.

Soviet press contentions that Soviet correspondents in the US are subject to discrimination continued to appear this week. Izvestiya reiterated the complaint that the US has refused to extend the visas of several Soviet correspondents and contrasted this (carefully avoiding any use of the word censorship) with the recent Soviet move "to improve the conditions under which American correspondents in Moscow transmit their reports."

The first authoritative Soviet comment on the Peace Corps program appeared in an article in the weekly Novoye Vremya which contended the Corps could never succeed in overcoming the "Ugly American image" of the US abroad as long as US society itself does not change.

6. Warsaw Pact Meeting. The communique published March 31 on the Warsaw Pact Meeting session of March 28-29 was brief and uncommunicative, suggesting that the same disputes which dominated the November meeting of Communist Parties reappeared, or that decisions were reached which will only be made public later. Before the meeting opened, there was speculation that it would be used to announce a reduction or possibly the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary, to exert pressures on Albania, to give momentum to the Germany-Berlin question, to reach a common position on Laos, or to counter the increased US defense budget and greater flexibility in policy with an impression of Bloc strength and unity. The communique gives little clue

as to whether decisions were made regarding these questions. However, it was clear from Chicom and Albanian representation at the meeting that the arguments which were aired at the November 1960 meeting have not yet been laid to rest.

7. [redacted]. A long Pravda (Mar. 30) article gave insight into current Soviet thinking on Congo but no indications of any shift of Soviet policy. Besides containing the customary attacks on Belgium and UN Secretary-General Hammarskjold, the article devoted ~~considerable~~ considerable attention to "neo-colonialism," as allegedly practiced above all by the US. Soviet press coverage of the Third African Peoples' Conference in Cairo has exploited delegates' statements on "neo-colonialism" in order to associate the US with European Colonial powers in anti-colonial propaganda. The Pravda article endorsed the Gizenga government as expressing the basic interests of the entire Congo people, and specifically the will to national unity. It referred in general terms to conflicts of interest and personalities and lack of organization among the Congolese as important factors in the difficulties encountered in the national-liberation struggle in Congo. It also asked rhetorically whether the Indians, Tunisians, Ethiopians, and Sudanese really desired the dispersal of the Congolese parliament and government, the murder of Lumumba, agreements on the dismemberment of Congo and its transformation into a colonialist fake confederation when they voted for Kasavubu and Hammarskjold in the UN. The reference to the Asian and African neutrals suggests a considerable degree of Soviet discomfiture at their own isolation on Congo and irritation at the neutrals' independent role.

8. The Pushtunistan Issue. The most authoritative recent Soviet press treatment of Pushtunistan, a Mar. 25 Pravda article, came down clearly on the side of the Afghans. The article specifically restated Khrushchev's March 1960 support of the Pushtuns' right of self-determination through a plebiscite, and condemned Pakistani punitive measures against the Pushtuns. The Pravda reference to Soviet concern at developments in an area in immediate proximity to its frontiers, as well as the mention of the U-2 incident, seemed intended as a warning to the Pakistanis that the Pushtun issue had international implications going beyond Afghan-Pakistani relations and that the Soviets had a firm political commitment to Kabul. At the same time, the article somewhat softened its criticism of Pakistan by attributing the origin of the Pushtun problem to the British, and by expressing the hope that good sense would prevail between the two disputants and a solution by peaceful means would be achieved.

9. Geneva Test Ban Talks: The Soviet position at the nuclear text suspension talks, as reported in the Soviet press this week, emphasized their charges regarding French testing. Most papers published stories from various Soviet correspondents in Geneva alleging that the US and UK are deliberately using the French to continue experimental testing and claimed French testing "could make a test ban treaty still-born." Pravda (March 30) included an article entitled "First Week of Negotiations" which again stressed the importance of French testing for the fate of the talks, and complained about the "Western propaganda campaign" which has been launched to discredit the Soviet proposals for increasing the effectiveness of a control organization to implement a test ban agreement.

[redacted]

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19. Visits. The finance minister of the Provisional Algerian Government and the deputy chef de cabinet of the FAG council of ministers (A.Francis and M. Bedzhaui) were reported in the press to have met Mar. 27 with CPSU Presidium members Kosygin and Mukhitdinov. There was no indication of the substance of the conversation, though it was speculated that the Algerians' visit had some connection with the impending French-Algerian negotiations.

Burmese Commander in Chief, General Ne Win, arrived in Moscow Mar. 30.

MILITARY

Negative

FOR THE AMBASSADOR:

Boris H. Klosson
Counselor for Political Affairs.

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